

**Bartosz CICHOCKI,**  
*Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary  
of the Republic of Poland to Ukraine*

## **‘WE ARE WITNESSES TO GREAT UKRAINIAN HEROISM...’**

*Interview with Ambassador Bartosz Cichocki taken by Igor Janke, host of the ‘Open System’ (Układ Otwarty) YouTube channel, on 5 March 2023. To view the original in the Polish language, please follow the link: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IKMMWGa\\_vTE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IKMMWGa_vTE).*

***Igor Janke: ‘I am currently at the Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Kyiv. This diplomatic mission stands out as one of the few – in fact, the only one among those representing the European Union countries – that remained operational throughout the war, even during its hardest days. Here, in the cellars, Mr Ambassador and his closest colleagues would hide or sleep, as Kyiv was really unsafe at the time. I am about to discuss those very first days with Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Bartosz Cichocki. What was going on in Kyiv? How do Ukrainians perceive us today, and what is the future of Polish-Ukrainian cooperation?’***

– Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. This is a special episode of the Open System, broadcasted from Kyiv. I am delighted to be a guest of the Embassy of the Republic of Poland and speak with Ambassador Bartosz Cichocki.

– Good afternoon. It is my pleasure to have you here as my guest.

– Could you please recount the atmosphere one year (or one year plus a couple dozen days) ago when the world was anxiously waiting to see if Russians would launch an attack on Ukraine? What did you witness happening here from 24–25 February onwards through the remainder of that month?

– For me, this story began around late October or early November 2021 since that was when I took the American and British reports of the looming Russian large-scale aggression very seriously. While the reliability of those reports was debated at that point, I felt it was crucial to prepare for the worst-case scenario. I may not own a crystal ball, but it is best to be ready for the worst. Thus, we started sifting through our archives, ensuring we had sufficient fuel, water, and food supplies, inspecting our generators and so forth. We aimed to be prepared for the situation when we would need to evacuate our representative office with little time to retrieve many belongings. We paid much focus to ensuring the safety of our employees and their families. At the same time, the Polish-Ukrainian relations went on as usual. I recall a railroad transportation crisis at that time. The Ukrainian side had blocked freight transportation to Poland and other countries,

so we had to navigate those two parallel realities. At the end of January – and, I reckon, now it sounds unbelievable – we held a crucial discussion with representatives from the Ministry of Infrastructure in the presence of senior officials from the Office of the President of Ukraine concerning the reasoning behind the stalled freight cars. In February, Ukraine was visited by Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki, Foreign Minister Zbigniew Rau, who came here as the OSCE chairman, and – perhaps, most memorably – Polish President Andrzej Duda, who arrived mere hours before the start of the invasion.

– *President Andrzej Duda arrived on 23 February, didn't he?*

– Yes. But by then the talks were about the needs of Ukrainians, how we could support them, and how the whole situation could work out.

– *Did you already feel the war was coming?*

– I remember visiting Kharkiv together with Minister Zbigniew Rau. There, in the building of the regional state administration, which would before long end up destroyed by Russian missiles, we met with President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy. It was then that the Consulate General of the Republic of Poland in Kharkiv received a confidential message that prompted my immediate decision to implement remote work for the wives of our diplomats. We did not call it an evacuation. The thing is that most of the wives (and in some cases, husbands) of Polish diplomats are either employed at the Embassy or a Consulate. That makes a large group of people and a large mission.

– *How many people were working here back then?*

– We had over 80 positions filled. Plus, children – some of my colleagues have, for instance, three children.

– *In other words, there were several hundred people?*

– Over a hundred. Fortunately, there were still flights a week and a half before the aggression started, so our wives and children left Kyiv. That made later preparations a lot easier and helped us stay focused. To my mind, that was our pivotal decision; I cannot imagine how 24 February would have gone for us had we stayed here with our families till then. I vividly remember all those visits, especially the one of President Andrzej Duda. It so happened that, in light of my experience as Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs and Ambassador, I have had frequent contact with the President, so it was not a meeting of total strangers. We bade farewell, not knowing when we would meet again, if ever at all. President Andrzej Duda was well aware of that, too. However, that visit, along with his previous and subsequent ones, meant a lot to the staff in Kyiv, having, among other things, encouraged us and uplifted our spirits. After Andrzej Duda's departure, I was signalled about the urgent message from Warsaw.

– *Was that on the evening of 23 February?*

– Yes, on the evening of 23 February, I arrived at the already empty Embassy and read the message, which basically confirmed what was to come. We knew how

to proceed at that point. Next came President Putin's speech, in which he de facto declared war under the guise of a 'special operation', making it clear that it was about to begin. Surprisingly, I went home, went to bed, and slept quite well in my pyjamas, which was something I could not do for weeks afterwards. Like everyone else here in Kyiv, I was snapped out of sleep by the explosion of the Russian missile that either struck Boryspil (an airport outside of Kyiv) or the military barracks in the Brovary or Boryspil area. Afterwards, we all gathered here at the Embassy.

– *How did you feel when you first heard the explosions?*

– In those weeks, I had the sensation as though I had seen that in a cinema – it felt like just another movie. Such feelings reminded me of 9/11. I was in Russia at the time, and through a TV screen, I saw the plane hijacked by jihadists crashing into the towers in New York. For a long while, I could not believe it was a news channel and not entertainment.

– *Yes, but here you experienced it first-hand, not through television.*

– True, yet the fact stands. It was still difficult to fathom that anything of the sort could occur in the heart of Europe. From my bedroom, I could clearly see the light from the explosion as the windows faced that direction. I can't say we were relieved, but at last, it became clear what was next. After all, the preceding November, December, January, and February were dominated by total uncertainty but also insecurity. What would our actions be? What was going to happen? Finally, on 24 February, at dawn, we started following the pre-agreed algorithm.

– *How many people remained here?*

– About 20–30 people. It soon became apparent that we would not be able to sustain our operation for long, as all the shops in Kyiv had closed, and the city was instantly deserted. The supplies of water and food rapidly dwindled, and it became clear there was a decision to be made, if only for that reason, regardless of the security angle. However, the main problem was that there were no flights, and the major routes to Poland were paralysed. Of course, we had an evacuation route, but the biggest challenge that arose then was how to leave Kyiv in a convoy of vehicles and not just one, two, or three cars. We were also worried about Polish citizens in Kyiv: journalists and even regular people who would come to us unexpectedly. As EU citizens and diplomats from other countries asked us for support, the convoys grew longer. There were several of them, so we could not have made it without the help from the Ukrainian side – people whom I can now call friends. Despite their more critical work, they answered my calls no matter the time of day or night and helped evacuate my employees and our diplomats safely and efficiently. For that, we are very grateful. A few weeks later, Polish President Andrzej Duda signed a decision to decorate Ukraine's Deputy Defence Minister Oleksandr Polishchuk with a high state award. I am glad that such people were recognised.

– *At the time, what was the most challenging aspect for you, personally? Which moment struck you the most?*

– Our attention was riveted on the potential land attack threatening Kyiv, which posed a risk of the enemy infiltrating our facility. Under such circumstances, the utmost concern was ensuring they would not get their hands on something they never ought to have. Hence, we were in for the painstaking physical effort of disposing of certain information systems.

– *Did you bring those with you?*

– They ceased to exist. For instance, consular documentation, like blank visa forms. I can no longer even recall whether we did it before or, perhaps, after 24 February.

– *Do I understand correctly: you feared someone might breach the premises and take possession of those documents?*

– Absolutely. Diplomatic institutions all around the world are prepared for such a scenario.

– *Except that wars didn't use to start there.*

– No, several wars did erupt. While those may not have always affected us, no one has forgotten the storming of the American mission in Benghazi. We needed to prevent anything like that from happening by safeguarding confidential documents, devices, coats of arms, and flags. I could not even bear to imagine the fallout from a release of footage of someone defiling our symbols.

– *Did you remove all of that?*

– Yes, [we removed] everything within the mission's premises except, naturally, the main flag in front of the Embassy and the coat of arms on the building.

– *Do I understand correctly: you were concerned that the Spetsnaz or someone else might enter [the Embassy] seeking to assassinate you?*

– I don't believe that could have been an objective because a diplomat is a valuable asset.

– *Even considering they wanted to kill President Volodymyr Zelenskyy?*

– I would rather avoid the comparison. Overall, the situation was tough. We were also extremely wary of looters, citywide riots, and panic. Back then, in the weeks preceding the aggression, the atmosphere in Kyiv was rather fraught, prompting us to prioritise the preservation of our mission. People fully expect diplomats to be more informed – and that doesn't just apply to Ukraine – leading to public scrutiny. I recall when a truck sent by the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs arrived to collect the diplomatic documents which had to be preserved and how that gave rise to sensationalist rumours that it was the Polish GROM or the evacuation of the mission. It was a sign of unease, as Ukrainians attached great importance to the presence of Western diplomats.

– *Of which all but you left?*

– Not all of them, in fact. The Apostolic Nuncio and Ambassadors of Georgia, Turkmenistan, and the countries of Central Asia remained; so did the Ambassador of Türkiye for a few weeks. This is something which needs to be talked about

more, as some colleagues evacuated thousands of their nationals during those weeks. China had many students in Kharkiv; Central Asian and North African countries also. So, I have great respect for my colleagues in the diplomatic corps.

– *Did all the European Union countries recall their diplomats, including ambassadors?*

– Some [staff members] would stay, but this, too, is a very complex question. In some cases, officers from the defence attaché's office remained; in others, it was consuls with whom we were in contact. In the deserted city of Kyiv, we received Estonians and colleagues from other embassies. In any case, we feared that panic or, for instance, the scarcity of food and water could lead to unauthorised entry into the mission. Our diplomats had left their belongings behind in several dozen flats (as their families had evacuated earlier; hence, they could only take the essentials, leaving with tiny suitcases in their hands). The option of calling in a team from Warsaw to retrieve their belongings was not on the table; hence, I haphazardly assembled a group of others with whom we went to those flats to collect the most valuable or cherished items – not everything since that would have been an unfeasible task, but at least the major stuff – and bring them to the Embassy. On one hand, it was difficult, exhausting, and stressful; some flats, for instance, were in Sviatoshyn – just one, two, or five kilometres away from an open artillery battle. Then again, I found solace in keeping busy. By contrast, there were days that seemed uneventful, and yet gave room for the scariest thing, inactivity: we were left with too much time to think. Besides, we received unexpected visitors, mostly Ukrainians of Polish origin and activists from Polish organisations who had decided to leave. We had not expected them to still be in Kyiv, so we ended up arranging their evacuation. There was even a lad with a gunshot wound in his leg who had come to join the fight, and we had to get him to the train, too. I could go on with plenty more of such stories. Today, those stories evoke no allure nor feeling of heroism – it was just our mundane life.

– *When you decided to become a diplomat, you must have had no inkling that such events could befall you.*

– Indeed, I did not foresee that. Then again, it is for a good reason that the profession is called 'foreign service', and all who choose to take on this job understand that it is not about the money or benefits but precisely about serving their country. So, we found ourselves in exactly the situation we were meant to handle.

– *It is known that you spent nights in the cellar.*

– It was a different experience for everyone, but yes, we all slept here. The more forward-thinking among us had brought air mattresses for themselves earlier, while others made do with chair cushions. We felt as if the cellar was the safest spot. I remember we slept in our clothes to be ready to evacuate from the Embassy at any moment. Very often, we walked around wearing bulletproof vests and helmets. During each air raid alert, we would seek refuge in this cellar

until a group of experts came to inspect the premises and advised us that it was the last place for us to hide: it had only one exit through a narrow corridor, and the ceiling was not reinforced in any way. Looking back, we were fortunate that nothing fell on our heads.

– *Am I correct to understand that you feared the possibility of a direct attack against the Embassy?*

– At that time, many reports (not all of which were later confirmed) stated that Russian sabotage groups had already infiltrated Kyiv, particularly in the Obolon district and Nyvky; naturally, we had to take that into account. On the other hand, ours was arguably among Kyiv's most heavily guarded facilities. Once again, our host state took a keen interest in maintaining the presence of diplomats, so even if the National Guard patrol assigned to guard our premises round-the-clock was not physically here, we received assurances that many units across various security structures were closely monitoring the Embassy and were on alert to help us if anything happened; naturally, that gave us a great sense of security. We also maintained direct communication with the commanders of the branches of the Polish Armed Forces, and it is not a big secret whatsoever to say that we were closely watched from Poland. We were confident that we would receive help in the event of any adverse situation.

– *But anything could have happened in an instant, and that help would not arrive in time.*

– All the same, nothing happened.

– *Yes, thank God we are here, and you can tell us about that. Was it scary, then?*

– This one is a very personal question. Like any healthy person, I experienced fear. However, during those days, even before the evacuation of employees, I witnessed dramatic situations when men who you would otherwise see as tough fell apart mentally. Often, that would happen after a phone call to a wife who could not cope with the psychological pressure. Clearly, no one who has seen such moments will criticise or deplore them, let alone if they themselves have never had to go through such an experience. I can only be grateful to Providence for having such a supportive wife. We remained in constant contact by phone, but she never once asked if I was safe. Neither did she ever say she was worried. Instead, she would tell me about her work. She was involved in organising large amounts of humanitarian aid from Polish entrepreneurs and companies. Together with the Dominicans from Fastiv, she evacuated over a thousand children, took care of the evacuated Poles and Ukrainian women who had arrived in Poland, and supported our First Lady. Each such conversation left me feeling immense support and driven to match her. Such experiences really vary by individual, but we all undoubtedly went through moments of weakness. For instance, I recall when the fighting around Kyiv stopped, and there was a brief calm for a week or two. Suddenly, I heard the sound of a machine gun barrage

in the distance. It greatly agitated me, as I had already become unaccustomed to such things. I did not expect danger to come back. After that, the situation calmed down again, until missile and drone strikes began. This war continually takes on new shapes; every time we think we have seen it all, something even more surprising occurs. Therefore, I believe we will have to face fear and anxiety many times over, and we must cope with it.

– *How did you view the city during that time? How has it changed? What surprised you the most about Kyiv?*

– The sight of an empty Kyiv is unquestionably unforgettable. A city with a population comparable to that of Berlin, a city constantly bustling with traffic and busy 24/7, suddenly became deserted. The one-way street where the Embassy is located turned into a two-way street simply because there was no one left there. In the absence of other neighbours, we took care of a crow and our yard cat during that time. Meanwhile, a network of checkpoints suddenly appeared in empty Kyiv. It was unclear where such a great number of concrete structures and iron anti-tank hedgehogs came from. Initially, all sorts of people ran those checkpoints, and again, that made me recall scenes from movies or books. I saw a lad wielding a rifle much heavier than himself (the imagery reminded me of the Warsaw Uprising), which was somewhat disconcerting. After all, it was evident that those people had not received military training, and their reactions under high pressure were unpredictable. We had to exercise great caution while moving around the city. However, Kyiv eventually returned to its usual state, and the checkpoints vanished as suddenly as they had appeared. Over the past six months, with the escalation of drone and missile attacks, I have witnessed the immense perseverance of Ukrainians, especially Kyiv residents. They have shown that no one can force them to replace their way of life. Once again, watching the restaurants, theatres, and cinemas, I feel as though it is all some kind of surreal dream. However, we must not forget that we are in Kyiv, a city that has emerged victorious from the defensive battle. A few hours away, in Kharkiv or Odesa, life is far from business as usual. There, the sounds of explosions and gunfire are constant, and the locals lack water, electricity, and heat.

– *It is indeed unusual, especially for someone arriving from abroad. One realises they are entering a war zone, a city where bombs are falling. However, upon arrival, life continues unabated. Shops and pubs remain open, and the streets are packed with cars. Everything works the same as in a typical European city.*

– I also gained the impression that one of the most wondrous aspects of this war is the resilience of the institutions of the Ukrainian state, which many of us were highly critical of before the full-scale invasion. There were concerns about corruption, inefficiency, excessive bureaucracy, and unclear procedures. Then, all of a sudden, it turned out that Ukraine has a railway system that functions impeccably; it turned out that its oligarch-controlled energy sector is able to

swiftly recover from shelling, ensuring the supply of electricity and water. Both the state itself and our perception of it have been severely tested. Undoubtedly, we are witnessing immense heroism on the part of Ukrainians. Those fighting risk their lives, yet we must also recognise the importance of those working, who go to work every day, who have stayed in the country and supported the Armed Forces in one way or another. I recall the visit from the commanders of the National Guard – specifically, the unit responsible for the Embassy’s protection. They had visited us several times, and we treated them to what we had in our warehouses. In a reciprocal gesture, they kindly brought us lunch prepared by their wives. I assure you, I had long since had such a lunch. Therefore, the support of loved ones matters, and support from Ukrainian society undoubtedly matters a lot to the Ukrainian soldiers.

– *Is it like that the entire time? After all, I have only been here for two days, but three months ago, I felt the same powerful morale around me, despite it being early December and fear looming all around. Yet I saw no fear in people’s eyes. It was rather us who were afraid for them, concerned about the city freezing, Putin paralysing the country by attacking all critical infrastructure, and expecting a brutal winter. Fortunately, that winter was not as harsh as anticipated. As I was arriving here again, I assumed the city had to have become deserted. And yet I hear there have been several weeks without blackouts, and everything functions normally. How did they manage to achieve this? You mentioned that the energy sector is controlled by oligarchs, implying that it could not function properly. Putin keeps devastating it, yet it still functions despite the bombings.*

– It seems Ukrainians may also be prone to or capable of circumventing those overly complex procedures and conflicting regulations. That is to say that we maintain constant communication with the Ministry of Energy and the heads of energy companies, according to whom the restoration of electricity production or distribution across the board has been the result of cooperative efforts of companies sharing their resources. In times of crisis, no one cares who has bought or who owns something, in other words, whether it is the DTEK or Ukrenergo that owns a substation or a transformer. Everyone just does their best to get things up and running. Thankfully, democratic countries in Europe that provide aid also operate with a similar mindset. Regarding energy cooperation, I recall how Minister Anna Moskwa and Polish energy companies jointly organised a train consisting of dozens of cars in just a few days or a little over a week. At that time, nobody worried about reporting or reimbursement; it was a matter of survival. Such situations bring out both the good and bad qualities in people. Someone’s weakness, hostility, or belligerence becomes more apparent; the reverse is true as solidarity, courage, and willingness to help will shine through from the right people. Consequently, people’s attitudes towards the situation differ. I often receive inquiries from Poland and other countries with a significant Ukrainian

population, questioning why the young men of draft age are among them and not here. They see those men drive expensive cars and spend money while their country is at war. Maybe so. I refrain from judging whether those individuals come to collect humanitarian aid. However, if a millionaire has fled from Iziurm in his Lamborghini, that is the car he will drive because it might be the only one he has. But, of course, the sentiments vary. What matters is that morale persists and determination prevails. And now, as new units are being formed, our Ukrainian Government colleagues assert no problems. They do not need to call for mobilisation, as men sign up as volunteers despite significant losses, many casualties, and even more wounded. That determination is not fading.

– *What have you learned about Ukraine this year? What did you not know before?*

– The Ukrainian public surprised me the least. I was more impressed with what I have already mentioned: the power of state institutions, which used to go unnoticed. It seems to me that it was Ukrainians who learned more about us. There is a strong sense of surprise and even euphoria about how the Poles have acted. Many of my interlocutors expressed that they had believed we held grievances against them concerning Volhynia Massacre or other dark aspects of our shared history and that we lacked solidarity with them. This perception must have arisen somewhere in the media. Ukrainians are very grateful, albeit with a slight touch of surprise, as they did not expect this from us.

– *I must say, whenever the people here discover I am Polish, it always makes for such a delightful moment. I imagine the Ambassador of Poland is treated like a king then.*

– Not like a king, but I have never felt prouder representing Poland and all of the people like yourself who have been so supportive throughout the hard months of 2022. I am glad that it is appreciated. We want to focus on ensuring that those positive emotions shared between us and Ukrainians endure after the war ends.

– *What kind of cooperation can we expect? How deep will it be? There are vague ideas about Ukrainian-Polish cooperation expressed by various authors, publicists, and politicians. How would you realistically assess this cooperation after the war?*

– Certain aspects of cooperation are already evident, such as the unprecedented interaction between the Armed Forces, special services, and the defence industry. I am confident that there will be joint Polish-Ukrainian projects and products that the Armed Forces will ultimately utilise. Tremendous work is underway to address and close the infrastructure gap. Unfortunately, I must admit, and this remark is primarily directed at the Ukrainian state, that it underestimated the importance of the Ukraine–Poland direction. While Ukraine had access to the sea and exported its grain and other agrifood products via ships, there was insufficient investment in the land, road, and border infrastructure.

We are trying to bridge those gaps, particularly around the functionality of border control points, access roads, and border management regulations. Unfortunately, this cannot be accomplished overnight.

– *From experience, I have witnessed that this problem persists. Ukraine has achieved more [in other areas].*

– However, much has already changed, not least thanks to the efforts of Minister Michał Dworczyk. Some border control points have been reorganised for the passage of trucks only, and some are designated for empty trucks. I understand that an average client of those border control points might feel impatient and nervous. Still, we must respect that the priority now is military supplies, fuel, and humanitarian aid. I am not saying that the border works flawlessly. However, many changes have been made. The other day, I mediated another meeting between Andrzej Adamczyk, Minister of Infrastructure of Poland, and Oleksandr Kubrakov, Deputy Prime Minister for Reconstruction of Ukraine. There is a very strong dialogue between the agriculture ministries since Ukrainian grain is a matter of concern in both Ukraine and Poland; hence, we must work together honestly as partners to find a solution. We have a unique opportunity to achieve progress in all areas of cooperation because we have established a level of trust that we did not have before. When we, let's say, demanded respect for the victims of the Volhynia Massacre, we were often suspected of having hidden agendas on the issue. However, now our Ukrainian partners know that we genuinely seek to resolve problems when addressing them. But we also must be honest with each other: a solution is not always available. Despite the ongoing crisis (or, perhaps, paradoxically – because of it), trade between Poland and Ukraine is increasing. This trend, too, is likely to continue. Ukraine is devastated, and its recovery will take multiple decades. However, I have already heard from Polish companies that they are ready to develop their production here. That is because, first, they have left the Russian market, and second, Ukraine's recovery will be like a magnet for the construction and furniture industries. Tremendous work is being done by Minister of Development and Technology of Poland Waldemar Buda and the Polish Investment and Trade Agency. A mention should also go to the currently significant percentage of Ukrainian companies relocating to Poland. They want to continue their operations but cannot do so in Ukraine. I am confident that we will see numerous Polish-Ukrainian business partnerships operating on both sides of the border. At every ministry and even at the local government level, I observe an intensive daily Polish-Ukrainian dialogue. Often, those contacts even bypass the Embassy. Theoretically, the Embassy represents our state and serves as the intermediary, yet that network is so extensive and communication is so intensive – especially in light of our very recently established close relations – that everyone circumvents formal channels in favour of direct interaction.

– *I would also like to share with you the purpose of my current stay in Kyiv. The Freedom Institute is about to sign an agreement with the Ukrainian Prism organisation. Together, we will establish leadership schools for the future Ukrainian elites, the individuals who will be at the forefront of rebuilding Ukraine and shaping it anew. We observe remarkable interest and openness here.*

– This is an area I have not mentioned; however, I recommend that you discuss this matter with the Polish Ambassador to the European Union, Andrzej Sadoś, or our Ambassador to NATO, Tomasz Szatkowski. You will learn just how much Poland does for Ukraine and alongside Ukraine on the global stage – in the EU, NATO, Africa, and Latin America, where Ukraine’s diplomatic presence is sparse. It is often we who put much effort into explaining and advocating for the importance of the ongoing war here. In the context of the European integration process, it is crucial to foster the formation of elites – an army of officials capable of effectively transplanting the EU legislation, standards, and values on Ukrainian soil. The dialogue on this subject is maintained by Ms Olha Stefanishyna, Deputy Prime Minister for European and Euro–Atlantic Integration of Ukraine, and Szymon Szykowski vel Sęk, Minister for EU Affairs. I am confident that synergy will be fostered here that will inevitably leave a positive mark on the quality of our relations. As a relatively young member state of the European Union, the Republic of Poland vividly remembers its own transformation and EU accession process. Therefore, our state is a natural partner for Ukraine, just like other countries in the region. Thus, each initiative akin to the one you mentioned is invaluable.

– *Thank you very much. Mr Ambassador, as we have previously mentioned, you work in what could be considered one of the busiest Polish missions, with representatives from the Polish government and various institutions visiting frequently. Undoubtedly, you have a lot of work here. Yet, I anticipate that your workload will only increase further after the victory parade.*

– Thank you, I am pleased to hear that. Indeed, we don’t have abundant free time to complain about, and we greatly appreciate the frequency of visits from Poland. Not all of the politicians in the West dare to come here, but we must also remain realistic. My colleagues in Berlin, Brussels, Washington, Vienna, New York, Paris, and the United Nations, whom I mentioned earlier, are just as busy, and they work on vital tasks. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland will certainly continue to handle everything. At the end of the day, let us not forget that we chaired the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe. I must commend Ambassador Adam Hałaciński for his exceptional work in that regard.